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# The Influence of Festivals and Local Events on Community Quality of Life

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UI, SANGCHOUL; DAY, JONATHON; and CAI, LIPING, "The Influence of Festivals and Local Events on Community Quality of Life" (2016). *Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally*. 9.  
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# **The Influence of Festivals and Local Events on Community Quality of Life**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the influence of festival experience on community quality of life. The study analyzed data of the Social Capital Community Survey 2006 by using Hierarchical Linear Model (HLM). Samples were ten communities and 4,592 individuals. To analyze relationships between individual level life domains (life satisfaction, financial satisfaction, and health) and community quality of life, HLM model separated effects of community features and life domains at individual level. Results showed that most life domains are significant and leisure experience such as festival participation rate also affects community quality of life.*

**Keyword:** *Festivals and Events, Hierarchical Linear Model, Leisure Experience, Quality of Life*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Festivals and events are crucial tourism resources. To attend festivals and events, tourists visit a host community and tourism destinations. Tourism plays an important role in stimulating a local economy at host communities. With respect to the role of tourism, many tourism scholars have paid attention to the economic impact of tourism because tourism could be a mean to revitalize economically depressed a region. However, in addition to the economic impact of tourism, some scholars have started to consider social and cultural impacts of tourism on destination. This is because researchers and local community leaders realize that the fundamental objective of tourism development is not only for raising a standard of living in a host community but also improving residents' quality of life (Andereck, Valentine, Vogt, & Knopf, 2007; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Lordkipanidze, Brezet, & Backman, 2005; Malecki, 2004; Neal, Sirgy, & Uysal, 1999; Neal, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2007). Quality of life (QOL) is quite a broad concept to measure residents' objective and subjective welling. QOL provides an analytical framework for investigating relationship between a host community and its industries. Therefore QOL could be one of the best tools to evaluate impacts of tourism on residents' life (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011b; Kim, Uysal, & Sirgy, In press; Perdue, Long, & Kang, 1999; Potter, Cantarero, & Wood, 2012).

To host festivals and events at local communities is a typical tourism development strategy. They attract tourists into the tourism destination, create tourism related jobs, and disseminate economic benefits throughout the tourism destination. Additionally, festivals and local events provide recreational opportunities and pleasant visitor experiences for local residents, affecting local residents' quality of life. However, little has been written about the influence of festivals and local events on residents' quality of life. The lack of an understanding about festivals and local events may hinder tourism marketers and community leaders to utilize them as a strategic way to improve residents' quality of life. Therefore, this study begins to investigate a specific role of festivals in improving quality of life.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Quality of life (QOL) has been attracting tourism scholars' attention because the ultimate goals of community-based tourism are to sustain community's development and to improve quality of life of local residents (Chancellor, Yu, & Cole, 2011; Karnitis, 2006). However, QOL remains an ill-defined concept. QOL can be measured at the individual level, the household level, the community level, and the regional level. QOL of a host community can be defined as "one's satisfaction with life and feelings of contentment or fulfillment with one's experience in the world" (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011a), emphasizing happiness and satisfaction with life.

A number of conceptual and empirical tourism studies have been done on festivals and local events, but there are some studies on the relationship between festivals and residents' quality of life. Research trends for the studies can be summarized into two main streams such as an economic, social, and environmental impacts study of festival and local events motivation study for festival attendees (Gursoy, Kim, & Uysal, 2004; Li, Huang, & Cai, 2009; Long & Perdue, 1990).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The data used in this study were the Social Capital Community Survey 2006. The Social Capital Community Survey was conducted by the Saguaro Seminar at Harvard University from Jan. 2006 to Aug 2006. 12,000 of telephone interviews were made, and 2,741 of national sample and 9,359 of twenty-two communities sample were obtained. Among them, ten communities and 4592 individuals were selected for analyzing the influence of festivals and events on community quality of life. The data set contains interesting variables. The first variable is residents' satisfaction for living in a community, next is overall life satisfaction, third is health perception, and financial satisfaction. The data also has two festival and event activity variables, and two demographic/objective variables were used. Hierarchical Linear Model (HLM) was intended to separate the effects of individual level and community level variables.

## **RESULTS**

Table 1 shows that community quality of life is affected by life satisfaction, health condition, financial satisfaction, income, age, and residents' leisure experience.

**Table 1**  
**Fixed Effects Estimates and Random Effects Estimates for a Model of QOL**

Parameter	Fixed effect component			
	Coefficient	Std. Err	95% confidence interval	
Intercept	0.856*	0.067	0.7242	0.9869
Life satisfaction	0.060*	0.006	0.0480	0.0716
Health perception	0.093*	0.010	0.0732	0.1131
Financial satisfaction	0.085*	0.017	0.0510	0.1192
The number of times to attend festivals and local events	0.003*	0.001	0.0015	0.0048
The number of times to attend art activities	0.000	0.001	-0.0009	0.0016
Income	0.047*	0.005	0.0373	0.0576
Age	0.007*	0.001	0.0059	0.0083
Random effect component				
Intercept	0.127*	0.029	0.0805	0.1993
Log Likelihood	-4608.8217			

\* p < .01

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the influence of festivals and local events on community quality of life. In HLM model, antecedents of community QOL were controlled, and characteristics of a destination were measured by a HLM model. Results showed that each community has a different level of QOL and leisure experience (i.t. the number of times to attend festivals and local events) is a crucial variable to improve residents' quality of life. At the same time, the HLM model included an objective quality of life indicator so that consider the effects of subjective and objective quality of life indicators. This study suggested how to combine subjective and objective indicators at analyzing quality of life construct.

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